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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: PAKISTAN, AFGHANISTAN, U.S.
ELECTIONS, U.S. FOREIGN POLICY, NORTH KOREA, WORLD
ECONOMIC CRISIS, SOUTH ASIA/SRI LANKA; NEW DELHI -
OCTOBER 18-20, 2008.

This cable reports on relevant media reaction from India's large non-English press. Embassy New Delhi reports on English-language media via email in the daily "Early Edition". USG customers please write to Geeta Krishali (KrishaliG@state.gov) to subscribe to the "Early Edition."

PAKISTAN

1. "AMERICAN ATTACK ON PAKISTAN", editorial in October 18 right-of-center Urdu daily "MUNSIF", Hyderabad: "For the last few months, Pakistan is paying the price of friendship and cooperation with America. America sought no permission from Pakistan for air attacks within its territory. Either America did not consider the prior permission necessary, or Pakistan government has no guts to stop America from intrusion into its own territory, and killing its unarmed civilians. In fact, American forces besides NATO forces are ruling the roost in Afghanistan. Perhaps, Pakistan government has a clear vision of horrendous consequences of stopping America from any military action. America is continuously intervening into internal affairs and geographical integrity of Pakistan, while the latter seems helpless vis-à-vis America. It is irony of fate that, in Pakistan, there are neither potential democratic institutions nor political leaders who have enough wisdom to, effectively, intervene in matters of national interest. Until and

unless these democratic institutions become strong and the political parties rise over their petty interests, no transparency will surface in Pakistan.

AFGHANISTAN

¶2. "JIRGAH OF PAK-AFGAH TRIBALS", editorial in October 17 right-of-center Urdu daily "HAMARA SAMAJ", New Delhi: "Recently, several American military generals opined that they are losing the war in Afghanistan and the day is not far off when they will have to escape from Afghanistan as the Russians did. Being an Afghan, Hamid Karzai, in the know of the Afghan psyche and situation, also brought President George Bush abreast of the fact that he cannot run the government for long with the support of American and NATO forces, because Afghan Taliban leaders and military experts are giving a tough fight to American and NATO forces. Jirga (Tribal Jury) of Pakistan and Afghanistan can not be beneficial unless people of both the countries including the USA support it sincerely. In Afghanistan, America is fighting a lost battle, a battle that shattered the American economy. The only way out to get out of the prevailing financial crisis and recession is that America retreats from Afghanistan. Without that, the proposed Jirga cannot be successful and the whole region will become a hub of terrorism. It will be better if America, Pakistan and Afghanistan resolve to make their joint efforts on the basis of justice and

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principles."

¶3. "AL-QAEDA, UNO AND INDIA", editorial in October 18 right-of-center Urdu daily "RASHTRIYA SAHARA", New Delhi: "Ever-increasing influence of Al-Qaeda and Taliban and losses suffered by allied forces in Afghanistan has disturbed the sleep of America and its allies. America, which initiated war on terrorism with great hullabaloo, is in dire straits in Afghanistan. Afghan citizens are being annihilated by NATO forces, in the name of anti-terrorism measures. Moon's report vindicates the fact. That is why, pro-Taliban forces, once again, regained strength. Such a situation is grim, and a big challenge for the allied forces. This is the reason why America is negotiating with Taliban tacitly. This way, American forces made common Afghan people target of their tyranny and oppression, gave rise to Afghan resurgence once again."

U.S. ELECTIONS

¶4. "EYE ON AMERICA" first in the series of front-page reports on U.S. Elections written by editor Kumar Ketkar from Washington in the October 19, 2008, multi-edition LOKSATTA. "Contrary to the popular opinion in India, there are a lot blue-collar Indians in the U.S. Of the total 25 lakh Indians migrated to the U.S., a small minority belong to the higher income group, but a large majority are semi-skilled daily wage earners. The Gujaratis and Punjabis of course own some small-scale businesses, especially in the motel industry. The reason for underlining this demographic divide is because all these Indians form a 'vote bank' in the U.S. Former U.S. President Bill Clinton had enjoyed the support of the Indian motel owners. Indians have become a recognizable force, socially, politically as well as electorally. Presidential nominee Barack Obama's open anti-Pakistan stance during the campaign therefore needs to be perceived in the context of the growing political weight of Indians in the U.S.... Going by the voting patterns in the past presidential elections in America, Indians are voting for the Republicans after 1988, although the party

was earlier identified as conservative and retrogressive by Indians... This year many Indians show a definite tilt towards Obama. Indians who are taxi drivers, hotel waiters, restaurant workers, identify themselves with a candidate like Obama. However, this identification may not help Obama in terms of votes, precisely because they are unauthorized - illegal immigrants who are trying to build their lives in the land of opportunities. Living on the periphery of a superpower, they are certainly supportive of Obama, but they are not voters..."

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

15. "IRAQ: WHAT WILL BE THE APPROACH OF AMERICA'S NEW

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GOVERNMENT?" Op-Ed article by columnist Muzaffar Hussein in the October 18, 2008 Mumbai-based centrist Gujarati daily evening newspaper JANAMABHOOMI. "The world's superpower, America will witness two significant changes on its political horizon in the next two months. Firstly, it will be clear whether America's new President will be Democrat Barack Obama or Republican John McCain. Irrespective of which candidate wins the contest, the incumbent in office will face an enormous challenge to resurrect the economy from the current recession.... On the other hand, surveys reveal that Obama is quite ahead of his rival McCain in popularity ratings. Going by Obama's speeches, it is clear that an Obama victory would result in the new administration focusing more on healthcare rather than on military spending.... As far as Obama is concerned, he is clear in his views on Afghanistan, i.e. continuing the fight against terrorism. McCain on the other hand has stated he will not settle for anything less than final victory in Iraq.... Whatever both candidates say, the one pertinent question here is: Will America be able to sustain such expensive wars when its own economy is in the doldrums?... The American economic recession is a blessing in disguise for Iraq. It is possible that this might trigger the withdrawal of U.S.-led coalition forces from Iraq...."

NORTH KOREA

16. "GOOD-EVIL," editorial in the October 20 independent Kolkata Bengali daily, ANANDABAZAR PATRIKA. "Pyongyang is happy. For, a name has been deleted from the 'Axis of evil'. America too is happy since North Korea has initiated...shutting down its main reactor... The stage is set for unveiling an iron curtain. The rest of the world is watching keenly how the task of uprooting terrorism is pursued henceforth... However; the existence of yet another uranium enrichment plant in North Korea is suspected... The current situation indicates that North Korea's economy will virtually stumble without direct support from South Korea... It will be difficult to run the country merely with foreign aid... It is an interesting situation."

WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS

17. "WORLD IN CHANGING MODE," op-ed in October 19 DAINIK JAGRAN Hindi daily by security expert K. Subrahmanyam: "The US financial crisis has now spread worldwide. The crisis will bring widespread changes in the global economy and will affect the balance of power. No nation will be untouched. Even countries like Russia and China are struggling with the effect of the stock market-crash. Indian exports will certainly be affected.... Since the U.S. is the topmost country in terms of economy,

technology and military power, it is natural that the changes will affect America's position in the world. It

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is also likely that the recovering process from the recession will be based on new technologies."

18. "GLOBAL RECESSION," editorial in October 17 DAINIK BHASKAR Hindi daily: "Although the government says that the foundation of our economy is strong the global financial meltdown is beginning to have visible consequences in Indian aviation industry... The global recession, which has created terrible destruction in the U.S. and Europe, has slowly taken several countries of Asia in its grip. A high-level committee is carefully investigating all the aspects of the crisis. The government should also take the initiative to find a solution to this problem otherwise it can also take other industries related to aviation in its grip. The government should plan the entire strategy to deal with the effects of the slowdown and should take the people into confidence before the situation goes out of hand."

SOUTH ASIA / SRI LANKA

19. "THE FIRE IN SRI LANKA," editorial in October 18 HINDUSTAN Hindi daily: "The UPA government's key ally DMK is demanding India's intervention to halt the Sri Lankan armed forces' military offensive to crush the Tamil militant group-- LTTE. Political parties like DMK should understand that they putting the Indian government in a difficult situation by making such demands and playing opportunistic politics.... Interference in a nation's (Sri Lanka's) internal affairs is not just inappropriate, but impractical. On the other hand, it is really difficult to understand how a militant group like LTTE can be favored!"

WHITE